



EXHIBIT 87
DATE 3/19/07
SB 300

2800 Tenth Avenue North
P.O. Box 37000
Billings, Montana 59107-7000

March 19, 2007

Dear Montana House Judiciary Committee:

As representatives of Billings Clinic a Level II Trauma Center, we are writing to respectfully ask you to support Senate Bill 300. This bill will soon come to a vote in your committee. We are the front line, the men and women who treat the devastating effects of motor vehicle crashes. Every day we witness the difference between choosing to wear a seatbelt and choosing not to.

If passed, SB300 will help decrease the financial toll associated with crashes. At our Trauma Center, the cost of caring for an unrestrained, non-seatbelt wearing occupant is almost double that of the restrained, seatbelt wearing occupant. The amount of time the restrained occupant is in the hospital averaged 3.41 days in 2005. During that same time period, the unrestrained occupant averaged 7.91 days in the hospital. As you can imagine, the financial toll to the families would be great as well. SB300 would increase the percentage of occupant seatbelt use. In other states that passed similar legislation, seatbelt usage increased 10 to 20 per cent. This would translate to lives saved and the number of serious, debilitating injuries decreased.

392 W/58
222 W/58

SB300 also makes child restraints a primary law. According to the National Highway Safety Administration, 60 per cent of children who died in car crashes were not wearing restraints. Again, SB300 saves lives. I would ask you, if you knew you were going to be in a car crash, would you wear your seatbelt? If you are like the 99 per cent that answer yes, then why would people choose not to wear them? People believe that they are not going to be in a crash and therefore take the sometimes fatal chance of choosing not to wear their seatbelt and then we bear the financial burden, and their family bears the financial and social burden of their loss or severe injury.

We believe SB300 is an important bill. It will benefit the community at large by decreasing the financial toll to all Montanan's and most importantly, save lives.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Billings Clinic
Emergency and Trauma Center